

LEADGATE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1919.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit to you my first Annual Report since my appointment on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the Leadgate Urban District for the year 1919.

The population of the District at the Census, 1911, was 4990. The estimated population for 1919 is 5292.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

Your District, which includes the town of Leadgate, the village of Iveston, and the rows of houses known respectively as The Delves, Crookhall, East Castle, and Redwell Hills, covers an area of 1721 acres. It occupies a very elevated and exposed position and the subsoil consists of clay for the most part. Coal mining and, to certain extent, other works in the adjoining District of Consett are the chief sources of employment. All the collieries and works belong to the Consett Iron Company.

The majority of the houses in your area also belong to the above Company, there being comparatively few private owners.

The number of people requiring Poor Law Relief is very small. Hospital treatment is given gratuitously at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and the Poor Law Hospital at Lanchester. Accommodation for cases of Infectious Diseases is supplied at Leadgate Infectious Hospital and a Tuberculosis Sanatorium exists at Maiden Law, three miles from Leadgate.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The Ministry of Health has decided not to issue the tables usually sent each year and Medical Officers of Health are not required to insert in their Annual Reports such detailed statistics as are contained in those tables.

In calculating the statistics the population for estimating the death rate is 4985. This excludes all non-civilian males and is based upon the rationing returns from the Ministry of Food. For calculating the birth rate the population as estimated by the Registrar General is 5193. This includes all the elements of the population contributing to the birth rate and consists of the civilian population plus all non-civilians enlisted from the District.

The total number of births registered in 1919 was 143—70 males and 73 females. This gives an annual birth rate of 27·53 per 1000. In 1918 the birth rate was 30·68 and in 1917 it was 22·53. The birth rate for all England and Wales for 1919 was 18·5 per 1000 total population.

The total number of deaths registered in 1919 was 69—36 males and 33 females. This is the net total after adding the deaths of residents which occurred outside the District and deducting the deaths of non-residents which were registered in the District. This gives an annual death rate of 13·84 per 1000 inhabitants. In 1918 the death rate was 16·46 and in 1917 it was 13·15 per 1000. The death rate for all England and Wales for 1919 was 13·8 per 1000 civilian population.

Out of the total number of deaths registered, 6 were due to Diphtheria, 6 to Influenza, 4 to Pulmonary Tuberculosis, 5 to Cancer, 3 to Heart Disease, 5 to Bronchitis, 9 to Pneumonia, and 2 to Measles.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

16 deaths of children under 1 year were registered, equal to an Infantile death rate of 111·8 per 1000 births. In 1918 the Infantile death rate was 74·8 and in 1917 the rate was 118·5 per 1000 births.

The following table shows the number of cases of each disease, the ages at which the deaths occurred, and the cause of death in each case :—

	Under 1 week.	1-2 weeks.	2-3 weeks.	3-4 weeks.	Total under 1 month.	1-3 months.	3-6 months.	6-9 months.	9-12 months.	Total Deaths under 1 year
Bronchitis	1	1	...	1	1	...	3
Diarrhoea	1	...	...	1
Congenital Malformation	1	1	...	...	...	...	1
Debility and Marasmus	2	1	2	5	...	...	...	5
Other Causes	2	...	...	2
Premature Birth	2	...	1	...	3	...	1	...	...	4

It will be seen from above table that 10 deaths out of a total of 16 occurred within 4 weeks of birth.

Many of these deaths are no doubt ante natal in origin and are due to ill-health and specific disease on the part of the mother. Ignorance on the part of mothers, intemperance in a few cases, over-crowding and defective sanitation also contribute to an increased Infantile Mortality. The regular attendance of more mothers and children at the Infant Welfare Centre, which is open in Leadgate once a week, would help very materially in the reduction of the Infantile Mortality rate.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

WATER.—A sufficiency of good water for all domestic and sanitary purposes is supplied by the Weardale and Consett Water Company. The supply is plentiful and constant, with the exception of periods of long drought. It is an upland water and is medium soft. There is no pollution of rivers or streams in your area.



DRAINAGE AND SEWAGE.—Practically all the sewage of the District is treated at the Sewage Disposal Works, a small portion being treated by dispersion over land. The main sewers are well constructed of sanitary pipes and are well ventilated. The Sewage Disposal Works, which are very suitably situated about a quarter of a mile from Leadgate, are on the Sutton or Bacterial Contact System, with slight improvements, and consist of a grit chamber, single tank, and six filters. The results are satisfactory, a good effluent being regularly obtained.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.—There are 3 types of closets in the District, ash-pit privies, ash closets, and water closets. A comparison of the different types existing in 1913 and 1919 is shown in the following table :—

	<i>Ash-pit Privies.</i>	<i>Ash Closets.</i>	<i>Water Closets.</i>
1913.....	419	104	143
1919.....	378	115	197

SCAVENGING.—The scavenging of the District is done by a contractor who is engaged by the Consett Iron Company but who is responsible to your Sanitary Inspector for the satisfactory performance of the work. A few of the private owners and farmers do their own scavenging. The refuse is satisfactorily disposed of on a tip which is sufficiently removed from all dwellings. Your Council have under consideration the question of taking over the whole of the scavenging as soon as the various conveniences are altered to the satisfaction of your Inspector.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF DISTRICT.—A general inspection is carried out weekly by your Inspector, and in addition your Medical Officer of Health makes regular inspections of different parts of the District. 389 defective houses were inspected during the year. All the notices served were of an informal kind. When a house or houses, out offices or yards have not been satisfactory a letter has been sent to the owners setting forth the required improvements, with the intimation that the Inspector would meet them and discuss the improvements necessary. In this way many of the defects were remedied, but the shortage of workmen and the cost of building material prevented many necessary improvements from being carried out.

PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS CONTROLLED BY BYE-LAWS AND REGULATIONS.—Work-shops, 10 ; Bake-house, 1 ; Cowsheds and Milk-shops, 20 ; Slaughter-houses, 7. All the above have been regularly inspected and have always been found in a satisfactory condition. There is no public abattoir in the District.

SCHOOLS.—All the Schools, except one, in your area have sufficient water closets and an abundant water supply. The Schools have been disinfected several times during the year.

FOOD.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, AND MILK SHOPS.—There are 20 milk sellers or dairy men in the District. The number of cows kept per dairy is from 4 to 12. No tuberculous cows are known to exist. The supply of milk is good and at each inspection the dairies were found to be clean. **MILK ORDER, 1918.** The Health Visitor for your District has been attending to the supply of milk in necessitous cases and in addition all the local medical men and the District Nurse were informed that if they would bring to the notice of the Medical Officer any deserving cases they would receive attention.

OTHER FOODS.—A quantity of cheese and two separate lots of imported meat were condemned as unfit for human consumption.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

149 cases of Infectious Disease were notified during the year. The following table shows the number of each disease notified, the ages of occurrence, and the number removed to Hospital: —

	At all ages.	1 year.	1 to 5 yrs.	5 to 15 yrs.	15 to 25 yrs.	25 to 50 yrs.	50 to 70 yrs.	Sent to Hospital.
Diphtheria	35	1	9	15	3	7	...	29
Erysipelas	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Scarlet Fever	3	...	...	3	...	...	...	3
Measles	97	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pulmonary Tuber- culosis	8	...	...	1	2	4	1	...
Acute Pneumonia	3	...	...	...	1	2	...	...
Ophthalmic Neonat.	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Malaria	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...

OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM.—Only one case reported, which recovered.

MEASLES was very prevalent in the District during the months of October, November, and December. It will be seen from above table that 97 cases were notified. Fortunately the epidemic was of a very mild type as only two deaths were caused by it. Acting in conjunction with the School Medical Officer I closed the Infants' Department of the Schools for a period of 4 weeks.

DIPHTHERIA.—There were 35 cases of Diphtheria notified during the year and 29 of these were isolated at Infectious Hospital. 6 of the cases notified died. 19 of the cases occurred in the small village of Iveston and in November I issued a report to you on the outbreak. All the houses were visited either personally by myself or your Sanitary Inspector, and nothing of an insanitary nature was discovered. In a small village where people frequently visit each other, the disease is often spread by personal intercourse. All possible steps were taken to prevent the spread of infection, namely, removal of patients to Infectious Hospital, disinfection of houses and bedding, and preventing "contact" children from attending school for the necessary time. No repeat cases occurred in any of the houses. Diphtheria anti-toxin is kept at my Surgery in Leadgate, where the local practitioners obtain it when required.

TUBERCULOSIS.—8 cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis were notified during the year and 4 deaths were registered as being due to this disease. The Tuberculosis Dispensary, which is open one day weekly at Consett, is regularly attended. In addition the local Health Visitor attends to cases at their own homes and gives them the necessary advice as regards ventilation, disinfection, etc. After any deaths from this disease the houses and bedding are disinfected. The following Sanatoria are available: Maiden Law, Stanhope, Wolsingham, and Birtley. The regulations requiring the notification of all forms of Tuberculosis seem to be carried out as regards the Pulmonary type, but not as regards the other forms of this disease.

SCARLET FEVER.—Only 3 cases were notified during the year. All were sent to Infectious Hospital.

INFLUENZA.—6 deaths were registered as being due to Influenza and no doubt many of the 9 deaths registered as due to Pneumonia were Influenza in origin. During the Epidemic a few of the more severe cases were removed to Leadgate Infectious Hospital and great assistance was given by the District Nurse in nursing severe cases at their own homes. Acute Pneumonia is one of the diseases notifiable under the regulations of the Ministry of Health of Jan. 1919, and as only 3 cases of acute Pneumonia were notified during the year, it is evident that many other cases must have occurred and were not notified. A communication should be sent to medical practitioners in area informing them that all cases of Pneumonia and also all forms of Tuberculosis require to be notified under the regulations of the Ministry of Health.

BACTERIOLOGICAL WORK.—In suspected cases of Diphtheria, Enteric Fever, Pulmonary Tuberculosis, etc., bacteriological aid to diagnosis is carried out for the Durham County Council at the College of Medicine, Newcastle-on-Tyne. The medical practitioners in this District avail themselves largely of this aid.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

Your Sanitary Inspector, who also acts as your Surveyor, devotes his whole time to these offices and has carried out his work with great diligence throughout the year. Practically all the houses in the District have come under his notice and he reports monthly to your Health Committee the work done and that requiring attention. He also looks after the scavenging, superintends the removal of infectious cases to

Hospital, disinfects any houses, premises, or bedding exposed to infection, attends to anything insanitary, structural defects, overcrowding, and all the other duties imposed upon an Inspector of Nuisances under the Public Health Act. In addition to the inspections carried out by your Inspector, your Medical Officer of Health, by himself and in company with your Sanitary Inspector, has made several inspections of the District in the course of the year.

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES.—Patients suffering from Infectious Disease are treated at Leadgate Infectious Hospital, which is situated immediately outside your area. 40 beds are available and three different diseases can be treated at one time. Separate Small-pox Hospital accommodation is provided at Maiden Law, situated about 3 miles from Leadgate.

ADOPTIVE ACTS.—The following Adoptive Acts are in force in your District :—

Infectious Disease (Notification) Act, 1889,	...	...	...	...	Adopted in year, 1893.
Infectious Disease (Prevention) Act, 1890,	...	...	...	...	„ „ 1894.
Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890, (Part III.),	...	...	...	...	„ „ 1895.
Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907, (Parts II., III., IV., and VI.),	...	...	...	...	„ „ 1909.
Public Libraries Act, 1892,	...	...	...	...	„ „ 1896.
Public Libraries Act Amendment Act, 1893,	...	...	...	...	„ „ 1896.

BYE-LAWS.—New Streets and Buildings, 1916 ; Slaughter Houses, 1896 ; Prevention of Nuisances, 1896 ; Common Lodging Houses, 1896 ; Cleansing of Footways, Ash-pits, etc., 1896 ; Regulations respecting Dairies, Cowsheds, etc., 1896.

HOUSING.

Number of houses in District, 1069 ; number of Working class houses, 1000. Of the total number, 502 are 2 roomed houses, 270 are 3 roomed houses, 187 are 4 roomed houses, 62 are 5 roomed houses ; and 48 are 6 or more roomed houses. No new houses were built during the year and none are at present in course of erection. The population of the District has not undergone any material increase during the year, nor is any anticipated in the future. It is estimated that at least 100 new houses are required to deal with the increase in population and also with the defective property and overcrowding. The land for the new houses is being acquired and plans, etc., have been prepared and have been provisionally agreed to with the Housing Commissioner.

OVERCROWDING.—There is nothing does more harm to a community than overcrowding, whether it is overcrowding in rooms or overcrowding in space. Both these conditions are very marked in your District. There are approximately 200 houses with more than 2 occupants per room. The Registrar General has adopted the standard that overcrowding exists if a house is occupied by more than 2 persons per inhabited room. In addition there are some 20 houses occupied by more than one family. The scarcity of new houses and the fact that so many 2 roomed houses exist in your area are the main causes of this overcrowding. Out of a total 1096 houses, the Consett Iron Company own 628, and of these nearly 400 are 2 roomed houses and one of these rooms is practically unfit to be used as a bed room. After the erection of a sufficient number of new houses and the rebuilding of the old Consett Iron Company property all cases of overcrowding can be dealt with. At present if any bad cases are reported they are brought to the notice of the Consett Iron Company, who are requested to give the preference to larger families to occupy the larger houses as they become vacant. Several cases of overcrowding have been dealt with in this way.

FITNESS OF HOUSES.—The general standard of housing in the District is bad and is capable of very considerable improvement. A reconstruction and alteration of practically all the 2 roomed houses is very urgent. The proper course to adopt with all the old houses is to pull them down and build 4 roomed houses in their place with separate back yards and a water closet for each tenant. In the privately owned property the standard of housing is good, as the majority of the houses are self-contained and well constructed. The general character of the defects found to exist in the smaller houses is the bad state of repair as regards the roof and pavement of the floors. The kitchen, which is also the living room, has not sufficient light. There is a step-ladder approach from kitchen to attics. The attics, which have low sloping ceilings, have no fireplaces, and are also badly lighted and ventilated. The surroundings in many cases are insanitary and there are no self-contained yards. Ash-pit privies are far too common.

Practically all the houses have been inspected during the year and some minor repairs carried out. On account of the bad condition and defects in many of the houses in the District, the necessary alterations

and reconstruction of the existing defective properties is a very urgent matter. The rebuilding of the Consett Iron Company's Squares has been under consideration and each house is to have a separate back yard and water-closets substituted for the ash-pit privies.

UNHEALTHY AREAS.—A few sections of a very old property has been thus scheduled and these will require your attention in the immediate future as new houses or re-constructed houses become available. There are no houses let in lodgings or tent dwellers in your District, and the present bye-laws in force do not require any revision.

APPENDICES.—No complaints were made by householders that any houses in your area were unfit for human habitation and no notices were served under section 17 of the Housing Act, 1909. The number of houses inspected under and for the purposes of this section was 389, and 7 houses were considered to be unfit for habitation. The action taken as regards unfit houses has already been mentioned. No closing orders or demolition orders were served. The staff engaged in housing work consists of an Architect and Surveyor.

RECOMMENDATIONS :—

1. The need of a sufficient number of new houses is very urgent.
2. The reconstruction and necessary alterations to all the old property.
3. The substitution of water-closets for all ash-pit privies

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

JOHN MURRAY, M.B., B.Ch.,

Medical Officer of Health.

THE HAWTHORNS, BLACKHILL,

March 5th, 1920.

London W^{est}

429 Strand

British Medical Association

